

To learn more about
the wonders of wetlands,
visit these sites on the Internet:



Karner blue butterfly on a woodland sunflower

IDEM information about wetlands:

www.state.in.us/idem/owm/planbr/401/401home.html
(Or call 1-800-451-6027)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wetlands site:

www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands
(Or call the Wetlands Hotline at 1-800-832-7828)

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Photo Credits

DNR photographer Richard Fields: Side 1 - Karner blue butterfly on a woodland sunflower, Kids with cameras,
Baldcypress, Wading in the wetland, Green frog, Lotus leaves, Marsh marigold
Side 2 - Flooded house, Group wading in wetland, Pitcher plant

DNR photographer John Maxwell: Side 1 - Beaver

DNR photographer Stephen Sellers: Side 2 - Wood duck



Office of Water Management
317-233-8488 or 800-451-6027

GETTING YOUR FEET WET IN

INDIANA'S WETLANDS



Baldcypress



DO WE HAVE WETLANDS IN INDIANA? YOU BET!

Some people think that wetlands are only found in places like the Florida Everglades, and not in Indiana. But like most midwestern states, Indiana is covered with wetlands! In fact, wetlands are found in every Indiana county. Most are very small, but they are scattered all over the state.



Green frog



Beaver

WHAT IS A WETLAND?

Wetlands come in many different sizes and types, so it is difficult to explain in a simple manner what is and what is not a wetland. But in general...

A wetland is an area that is wet (for at least part of the year) and where water-loving plants grow. Wetlands are often in-between places; they lie between deep water (such as lakes and streams) and dry land.

GOING, GOING....GONE?



Lotus leaves

The majority of Indiana's wetlands have been drained, filled in, and converted to other uses. When the first European settlers arrived in Indiana, almost one fourth of the state was covered with wetlands. Since then, about 85 of every 100 acres of these original wetlands have been lost, leaving less than 4% of the state in wetlands.

Marsh marigold



PRE-SETTLEMENT

DRYLANDS - 76%

WETLANDS - 24%

TODAY

DRYLANDS - 96.5%

WETLANDS - 3.5%

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT WETLANDS?

Wetlands provide many benefits to you and your family, including...

CLEANING THE WATER YOU DRINK

Wetlands are nature's water filters. They trap and remove mud, silt, and other particles carried by water that runs off the land. In certain situations, wetlands can be constructed to help purify contaminated water. They can remove excess fertilizer, human and animal waste, and even some pesticides and heavy metals.



KEEPING YOUR HOUSE FROM FLOODING

Like giant sponges, wetlands can soak up huge amounts of rainwater. This helps to reduce or prevent flooding. They also slow down the flow of water across the land, which reduces soil erosion and damage to streambanks, roadways, and buildings. And in dry seasons, wetlands slowly release the water they stored up when it was raining.

PROVIDING PLACES TO LIVE FOR BEAVERS, DUCKS, AND FROGS



Wood duck

Wetlands provide a place to live for many kinds of animals and plants. Nationwide, about 900 different kinds of wildlife need wetlands at some time in their lives, and nearly half of all endangered wildlife depend on wetlands for survival. Beavers and muskrats are examples of Indiana wildlife that are totally dependent on wetlands.

PROVIDING PLACES TO ENJOY NATURE

Wetlands are fun places to visit! They are excellent for bird watching, canoeing, fishing, sightseeing, hunting, photography, and nature study. Many schools use wetlands as outdoor classrooms, where kids and teachers can wade into learning!



STUMP YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

Have some fun! See if your family and friends can answer these questions about wetlands:

1. How many different kinds of plants live in wetlands in the U.S?
a. 500 b. 3,000 c. 7,000
Answer: (c) Wetlands are some of the most rich and bountiful areas in the world! In Indiana, common wetland plants include cattails, bulrushes, sedges, and water lilies.
2. Wetland soils are made mostly of:
a. gravel b. decomposed plants c. mud
Answer: (b) The great abundance of plants that grow and die in wetlands every year sink to the bottom, where they decompose slowly into rich, dark wetland soils.
3. Wetland soils smell most like:
a. rotten eggs b. moldy bread c. skunks
Answer: (a) Beneath the water, decaying vegetation produces sulfur and methane gases, the same smells that come from rotting eggs. Luckily, you don't really notice these smells unless the soil beneath the water is disturbed.
4. What Indiana tree grows in wetlands and is a relative of the ancient redwoods and sequoias in California?
a. red oak b. red pine c. baldcypress
Answer: (c) Baldcypress trees grow mostly in the southern United States, but there are a few swamps in the southern tip of Indiana where baldcypress trees still flourish.
5. This wetland plant captures, drowns, and dissolves insects in its specialized leaves:
a. spiderwort b. pitcher plant c. Neptune flyswatter
Answer: (b) This unique "meat-eating" plant uses nutrients from the bodies of insects as natural fertilizer to help it grow in certain harsh wetland environments.
6. Which two fruits grow naturally in northern Indiana bogs?
a. apples and bananas b. persimmons and paw paws c. cranberries and blueberries
Answer: (c) People used to harvest and sell wild cranberries and blueberries in Indiana, but today most of the bogs where they grow have been drained for other uses, so these plants are rare.

Great blue heron



Pitcher plant